

Many Languages of Missouri



February 2024

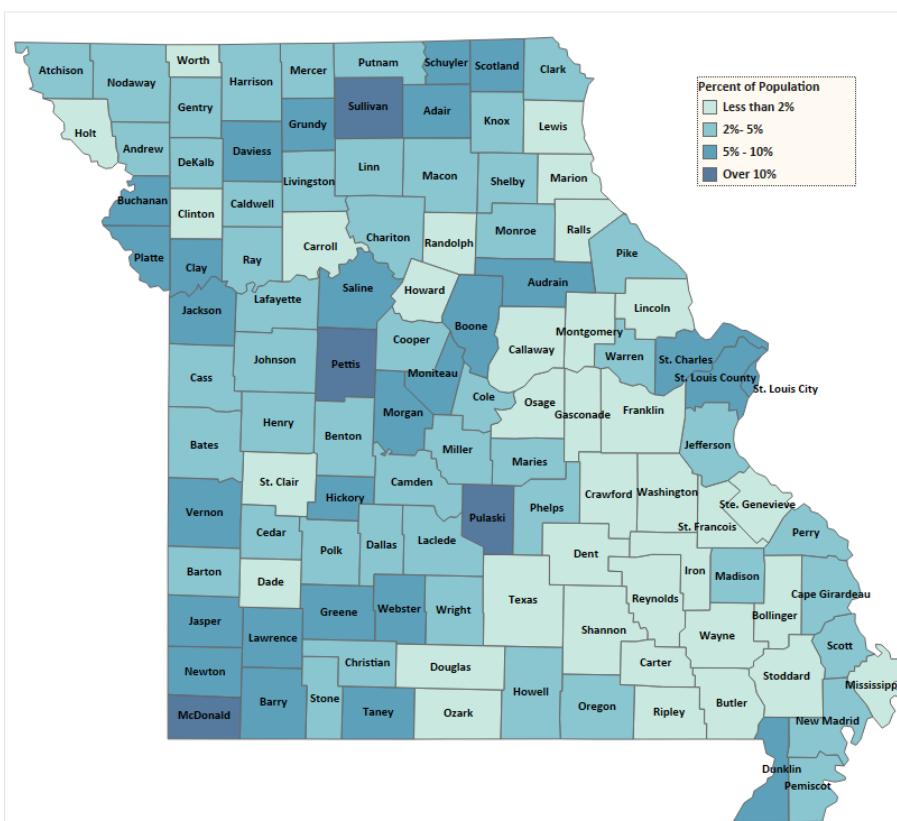
Missouri Language Diversity

The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) tracks language diversity to inform the public, businesses, agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders of the unique language diversity across Missouri. The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey asks if a person speaks a language other than English at home, what language they speak, and how well they speak English to create statistics about language and the ability to speak English. Local, state, tribal, and federal agencies use language data to plan government programs for adults and children who do not speak English well. These data are also used to ensure that information about public health, law, regulations, voting, and safety is communicated in languages that community members understand. The language data series also helps determine English Language Proficiency for translation requirements. Data in this report is from the American Community

Survey 5-Year estimates
for 2018-2022.

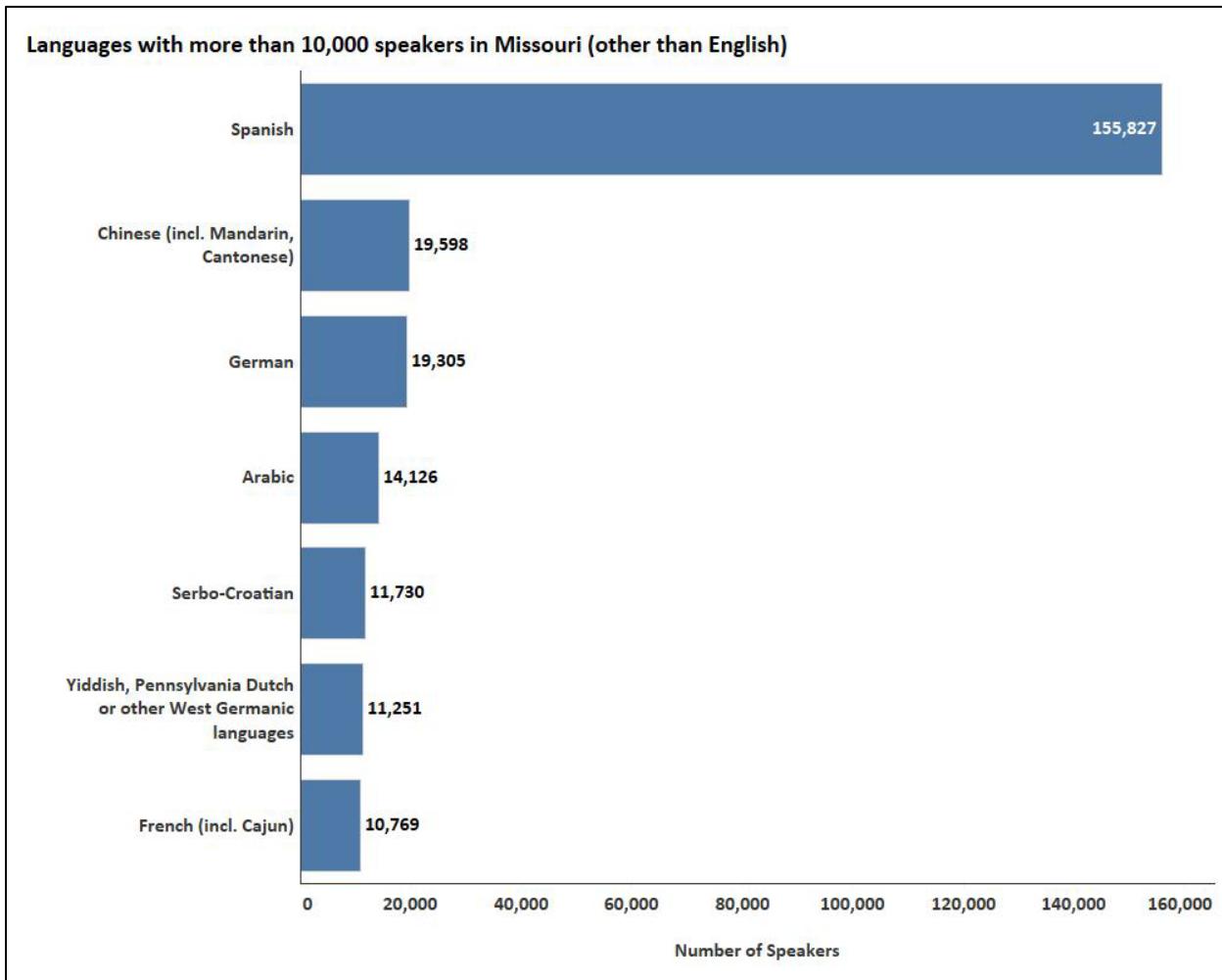
Ninety-four percent of Missouri residents speak only English. The remaining six percent have a primary language other than English but include those fluent in English and those who have limited proficiency in English. Counties in Missouri that have the largest percentage of the population of foreign-language speakers include Sullivan (18.1%), McDonald (14.4%), Pettis (12.0%), and Pulaski (11.9%).

Population (5 yrs & up) who speak a language other than English



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022)

The following bar graph represents languages at a more detailed level statewide. Out of more than 40 surveyed languages, seven had 10,000 or more speakers in the state, including Spanish, Chinese, German, and Arabic.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates (2018-2022)

The most common language spoken in Missouri other than English is Spanish. Spanish speakers make up 2.6 percent of Missourians 5 years or older (155,827 individuals) as of 2022. Sullivan, McDonald, and

Saline counties have the highest portion of their population that speaks Spanish, while Jackson County has the largest number of Spanish speakers.

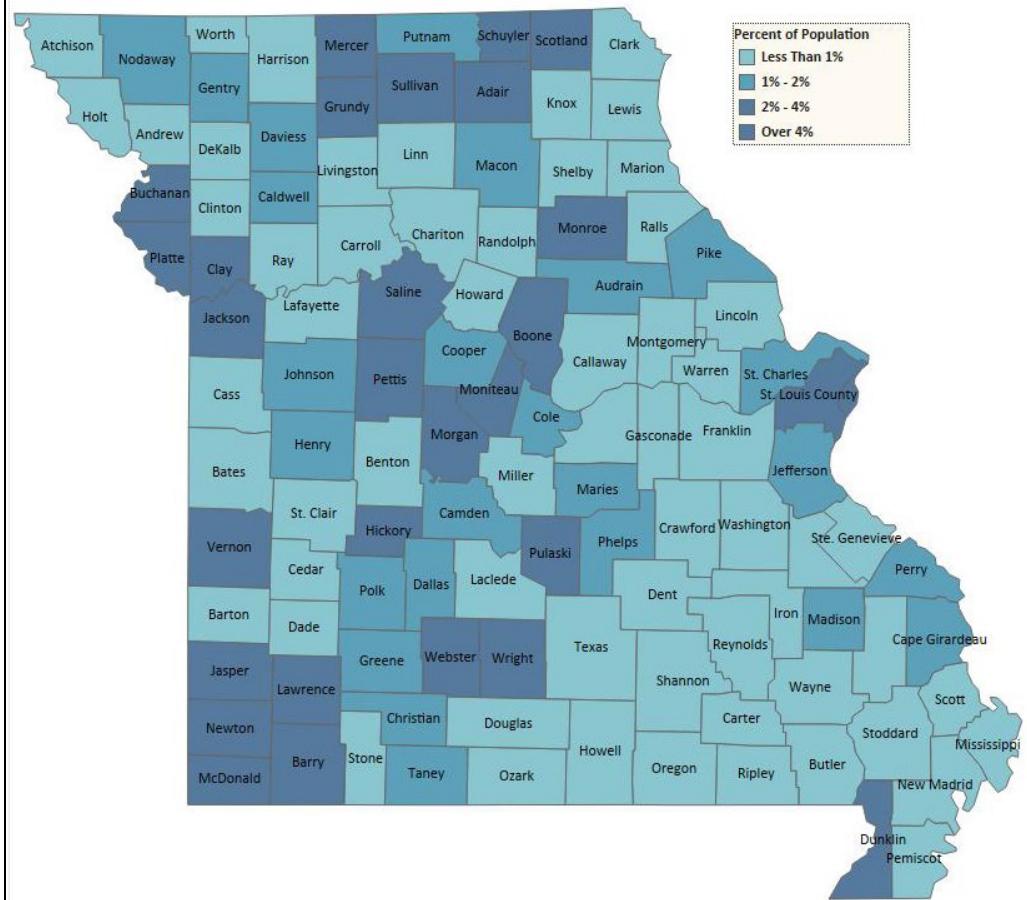
Highest Percentage of Spanish Speakers by County			
County	Population 5 years and older	Population 5 years and older who speak Spanish	Percent of Population 5 years and older who speak Spanish
Sullivan	1,991	837	14.9%
McDonald	8,399	1,865	8.5%
Saline	7,808	1,701	7.7%
Pulaski	15,653	3,298	6.6%
Barry	13,415	2,047	6.3%
Dunklin	11,134	1,658	6.3%
Pettis	16,696	2,455	6.1%
Jackson	298,908	40,106	6.0%
Jasper	47,481	5,694	5.0%
Lawrence	14,629	1,800	5.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022, 5 Year Estimates

Limited English Proficiency

Six percent of Missourians 5 years or older speak a language other than English at home. Counties in Missouri with the largest percentage of the population who have limited proficiency in English include Sullivan (8.1%), McDonald (7.3%), Pettis (5.4%), and Saline (4.7%). Spanish is most frequently spoken by those with limited English proficiency in those counties.

Population (5 yrs & up) with limited English proficiency



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022)

The following table shows a breakdown of the population (5 years and older) by county that speaks a language other than English or that has limited proficiency in English.

County	Population 5 years and older who speak a language other than English			% Population 5 years and older with limited English proficiency			County	Population 5 years and older who speak a language other than English			Population 5 years and older with limited English proficiency			County	Population 5 years and older who speak a language other than English			Population 5 years and older with limited English proficiency			
	Population 5 years and older	older who speak a language other than English	% proficiency	Population 5 years and older	older with limited English	%		Population 5 years and older	older who speak a language other than English	% proficiency	Population 5 years and older	older with limited English	%		Population 5 years and older	older who speak a language other than English	% proficiency	Population 5 years and older	older with limited English	%	
Adair	8,864	5.5%	3.5%	Grundy	3,806	5.8%	3.0%	Perry	7,329	3.3%	1.1%	Pettis	16,696	12.0%	5.4%						
Andrew	6,865	3.1%	0.5%	Harrison	3,013	2.0%	0.8%	Phelps	17,730	4.9%	1.8%	Pike	6,307	3.3%	1.7%						
Atchison	2,351	2.3%	0.3%	Henry	9,241	2.3%	1.0%	Platte	42,606	7.7%	2.3%	Polk	11,803	4.4%	1.2%						
Audrain	8,968	5.8%	2.0%	Hickory	3,504	5.7%	2.3%	Pulaski	15,653	11.9%	2.5%	Putnam	1,768	4.4%	1.7%						
Barry	13,415	8.6%	3.7%	Holt	1,744	1.4%	0.2%	Ralls	4,014	1.7%	0.4%	Randolph	9,101	1.5%	0.3%						
Barton	4,477	2.5%	0.4%	Howard	3,350	1.6%	0.5%	Ray	8,773	2.5%	0.3%	Reynolds	2,309	0.8%	0.1%						
Bates	5,929	2.5%	0.5%	Howell	15,433	2.8%	0.7%	Ripley	3,936	1.4%	0.1%	Saline	7,808	8.6%	4.7%						
Benton	8,146	2.6%	0.4%	Iron	3,821	1.5%	0.3%	Schuyler	1,264	7.1%	4.5%	Scotland	1,527	7.7%	3.1%						
Bollinger	3,791	1.1%	0.3%	Jackson	298,908	9.3%	3.6%	Scott	15,160	2.5%	0.2%	Shannon	2,753	0.8%	0.3%						
Boone	74,269	8.2%	3.1%	Jasper	47,481	6.7%	2.7%	Shelby	2,362	2.1%	0.7%	St. Charles	156,381	5.1%	1.6%						
Buchanan	33,363	6.5%	3.0%	Jefferson	86,455	3.4%	1.0%	St. Clair	3,955	1.7%	0.4%	St. Francois	23,973	1.7%	0.4%						
Butler	16,269	1.9%	0.5%	Johnson	20,613	5.0%	1.4%	St. Louis City	143,059	9.2%	2.9%	St. Louis	413,247	9.6%	3.0%						
Caldwell	3,480	2.4%	1.2%	Knox	1,154	3.9%	0.8%	Ste. Genevieve	7,121	1.6%	0.7%	Stoddard	11,472	1.0%	0.2%						
Callaway	15,981	1.4%	0.4%	Laclede	14,345	2.7%	0.7%	Stone	12,726	2.5%	0.6%	Sullivan	1,991	18.1%	8.1%						
Camden	16,494	4.6%	1.0%	Lafayette	12,165	3.5%	0.9%	Taney	21,595	5.7%	2.0%	Texas	9,335	1.9%	0.3%						
Cape Girardeau	31,578	3.8%	1.3%	Lawrence	14,629	8.8%	2.7%	Vernon	7,776	6.1%	3.2%	Warren	13,067	2.1%	0.6%						
Carroll	3,367	1.0%	0.4%	Lewis	3,329	1.2%	0.0%	Washington	9,032	1.9%	0.3%	Washington	1,032	1.9%	0.3%						
Carter	1,925	0.9%	0.0%	Lincoln	21,961	1.7%	0.6%	Wayne	4,490	1.2%	0.1%	Webster	13,717	6.8%	3.4%						
Cass	41,524	2.9%	0.6%	Linn	4,773	3.0%	0.4%	Worth	773	1.0%	0.1%	Wright	6,825	4.1%	2.4%						
Cedar	5,476	2.5%	0.2%	Livingston	5,463	2.3%	0.6%	Total Statewide	2,458,324	6.3%	2.1%										
Chariton	2,591	2.8%	0.6%	Macon	5,848	3.0%	1.2%														
Christian	33,411	4.1%	1.5%	Madison	4,633	2.8%	1.4%														
Clark	2,300	3.4%	0.4%	Maries	3,602	2.3%	1.0%														
Clay	99,501	7.3%	2.5%	Marion	11,295	0.6%	0.1%														
Clinton	8,047	1.9%	0.3%	McDonald	8,399	14.4%	7.3%														
Cole	30,151	4.1%	1.3%	Mercer	1,253	4.5%	3.2%														
Cooper	6,125	3.0%	1.1%	Miller	10,116	3.5%	0.7%														
Crawford	9,285	1.7%	0.4%	Mississippi	4,612	1.3%	0.6%														
Dade	3,020	1.6%	0.4%	Moniteau	5,691	9.6%	4.5%														
Dallas	6,604	5.0%	1.8%	Monroe	3,425	3.7%	2.3%														
Davies	3,016	9.6%	2.0%	Montgomery	4,644	1.9%	0.2%														
DeKalb	3,715	2.8%	0.2%	Morgan	7,820	6.8%	3.0%														
Dent	5,825	1.4%	0.2%	New Madrid	6,769	2.7%	0.4%														
Douglas	4,616	0.6%	0.4%	Newton	21,991	6.1%	2.8%														
Dunklin	11,134	6.7%	2.1%	Nodaway	8,261	3.0%	1.3%														
Franklin	41,512	1.8%	0.4%	Oregon	3,383	2.6%	0.0%														
Gasconade	5,970	1.6%	0.6%	Osage	5,220	0.9%	0.3%														
Gentry	2,347	4.8%	1.6%	Ozark	3,654	1.5%	0.1%														
Greene	131,109	5.6%	1.7%	Pemiscot	6,275	3.3%	0.5%														

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022, 5 Year Estimates

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Data accessed Dec. 2023

